

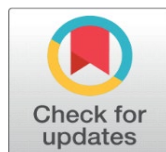
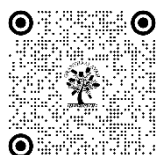
# WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR'S VISION: A SOCIAL WORK ANALYSIS

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## ABSTRACT

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is widely regarded as a fighter for the dignity of women and the champion of human rights. As a pioneering advocate for social justice, he dedicated much of his life to the empowerment of marginalized groups, particularly women and the depressed classes. His core belief was that everyone should be treated equally, regardless of caste, creed, gender, or religion. This commitment to equality led him to focus on the liberation of women and their rights, as he recognized the pervasive gender inequality within Indian society. The main objectives of the present study are to examine the role of Ambedkar's Vision on Women Empowerment, implementation of Constitutional Provisions for Women Empowerment and to explore the scope of Social Work Practice for Women Empowerment. Researcher has applied descriptive-cum-diagnostic research design to the present qualitative and quantitative research work. Author has used primary data, which is collected from the five villages of Sonapat District from 100 respondents through random sampling and secondary data is also taken from various online and offline sources. The main findings of the study are that the key contributions of Dr. Ambedkar's to women's empowerment were his role in shaping the Indian Constitution. The paper focuses on Dr. Ambedkar's thoughts and perceptions regarding women's empowerment, highlighting his understanding of the importance of gender equality for a just and progressive society. It also examines his contributions as a thinker and social reformer, particularly in the emancipation of women and the transformation of their social status. It was concluded that B. A. Ambedkar's contribution has a significant relevance in social work practice to work on women empowerment in the society.

**Keywords:** Constitutional Rights, Social Justice, Women Empowerment, Marginalized Sections

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Dr. Babasaheb B.R. Ambedkar is considered a supreme supporter, activists and advocate for equality, democracy, social justice and empowerment for all sections of the society, He emphasized his multifaceted genius and immense impact on India's socio-political fabric. His vision extended far beyond drafting the Constitution; he sought to establish an equitable and just society for all, especially the disadvantaged sections of society, particularly the Dalits, Backwards and Women. He has fought for the rights of the Dalits and backwards but he has equally advocated for the equality, democracy, social justice and empowerment for the women across sections and communities.

Dr. Ambedkar's academic excellence, demonstrated by his advanced degrees from prestigious institutions like Columbia University and the London School of Economics, reflects his remarkable intellect on understanding the condition of women and how to strategies the planning and actions for women empowerment. Despite facing severe social discrimination as a Dalit during his school years, he rose to become an authority on law, social justice, and

constitutional matters. His advocacy for women's rights, political autonomy, social equality, and economic justice are vital aspects of his legacy. His commitment to human rights and the upliftment of the marginalized, particularly through his efforts to eradicate the caste system, makes him a key figure in India's fight for social and political reform.

### **Constitutional Rights for Women in India**

The Indian Constitution includes several provisions aimed at improving the position of women and ensuring their equal status in society, helping them compete with their male counterparts. These provisions ensure equality in various spheres, such as political, economic, and social life. Some of an important articles in Indian Constitution for women are as given below-

- **Article 14:** Guarantees equality before the law and equal protection by the law, ensuring equal rights and opportunities for all.
- **Article 15:** Prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex, ensuring women are not discriminated against.
- **Article 15(3):** Allows for positive discrimination or affirmative action in favor of women to uplift their status.
- **Article 16:** Ensures equality of opportunity in employment or appointments, without discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, caste, or creed.
- **Article 24:** Prohibits the employment of children below 14 years in factories, mines, or any hazardous employment, safeguarding children's rights.
- **Article 39 and 39(d):** Ensures equal means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work, promoting economic equality.
- **Article 41:** Guarantees the right to work, education, and public assistance within the state's economic limits.
- **Article 42:** Provides for humane conditions of work and maternity relief for women.
- **Article 44:** Advocates for a uniform civil code, ensuring equal rights for all citizens, regardless of gender.
- **Article 46:** Promotes the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections, including women, and aims to protect them from social injustice and exploitation.
- **Article 47:** Focuses on raising the standard of living and improving public health, which indirectly benefits women and families.
- **Article 51A(C):** Mandates the fundamental duty of citizens to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

Ambedkar was with the strong view that gender inequality was deeply ingrained in Indian society; therefore he advocated for a systemic reforms to address the subjugation of women, especially those from marginalized communities. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar viewed women's empowerment as an integral part of achieving a just and egalitarian society. He believed that for true empowerment, women must be granted equal rights and opportunities in all spheres of life, including social, economic, and political domains.

## **2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- 1) To understand Ambedkar's Vision on Women Empowerment.
- 2) To examine the implementation of Constitutional Provisions for Women Empowerment
- 3) To explore the scope of Social Work Practice for Women Empowerment

## **3. RESEARCH DESIGN**

Researcher has applied descriptive-cum-diagnostic research design to the present qualitative and quantitative research work. Author has used primary data, which is collected from the five villages of Sonapat District from 100 respondents through random sampling and secondary data is also taken from various research papers, books and other sources on constitutional provisions, contribution of Ambedkar and impact of constitutional provisions and Ambedkar on Women Empowerment.

## Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Vision on Women Empowerment

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's views on empowerment, particularly through education, as a key tool for the emancipation of both individuals and communities, especially women. Dr. Ambedkar's thoughts on education highlight its transformative role in fostering equality, social justice, and individual autonomy.

Dr. Ambedkar identified education as a means to uplift both individuals and societies. He recognized two essential purposes of knowledge: improving the lives of others and improving oneself. In contrast to the British educational system, which he believed produced a clerical class of workers, Ambedkar advocated for a secular education system that would lead to social emancipation and freedom. This kind of education, according to Ambedkar, would challenge the oppressive social systems and enable marginalized communities to participate more fully in democratic life. Ambedkar's education philosophy was grounded in the values of liberty, equality, fraternity, justice, and moral character. He sought to ensure that people from all religions, regions, classes, and castes were taught these principles, which could promote unity and social progress. This broad, inclusive approach to education was part of his vision to break down the social hierarchies and discriminations that held back lower castes, especially women, from realizing their potential. When it came to women's empowerment, Dr. Ambedkar was particularly focused on education as the vehicle for their social, economic, and political upliftment. He emphasized that the progress of any community could be measured by the progress made by its women. In his speeches, such as the one at the Second All-India Depressed Classes Women's Conference, Ambedkar underscored the importance of educating women, encouraging them to foster ambition and to eliminate feelings of inferiority. He believed that educating women and their children would lay the foundation for a more equitable and just society.

In a broader context, it is explored that Ambedkar's commitment was to ensure social equality and justice. He saw education as an essential means for uplifting marginalized communities, including the Dalits, and breaking the cycle of poverty and oppression. For Dr. Ambedkar, literacy was both a practical skill and a powerful instrument for social transformation. **Ambedkar's Perspective on Women's Empowerment is highlighted as follows-**

- **Equality of Women in Society-** Ambedkar staunchly opposed the discriminatory practices that kept women in subjugation. He believed that women, like men, should have access to all rights, opportunities, and privileges. This included the right to education, employment, participation in public affairs, and the right to control their own lives.
- **Legal and Social Reforms-** Through his work in drafting the Indian Constitution, Ambedkar ensured that provisions for gender equality were embedded in the law. He advocated for women's equal rights to property, divorce, adoption, and maintenance. Ambedkar's fight for social justice included making legal provisions that would protect women from discrimination, oppression, and exploitation.
- **Education as a Tool for Empowerment-** Ambedkar believed that education was the most powerful tool for women's empowerment. He viewed education as the foundation for self-respect and independence, enabling women to make informed choices and become equal partners in society.
- **End of Patriarchal Norms-** Ambedkar challenged the patriarchal structures that dominated both Hindu and Muslim communities. He advocated for reforms that would give women equal standing in marriages, family life, and inheritance. His work was not limited to only Hindu women but extended to all women in India, including those in Muslim and other communities.
- **Freedom from Social Constraints-** Ambedkar also believed that social liberty, freedom from caste-based and gender-based oppression was essential for women's true empowerment. He worked towards dismantling these oppressive social systems and ensuring women's rights in society were upheld.

## Challenges before Women Empowerment and Ambedkar's View

The statement highlights the ongoing challenges faced by women in India, despite the progress made in literacy and social reforms. While many people are literate, true education – defined as access to knowledge and learning – has not been universally achieved, and this has hindered the full empowerment of women. The stagnation in social reforms, particularly when it comes to the role and status of women, is partially due to outdated notions about the "divine" status of women from ancient times, which continue to impact women's development today.

Despite the era of globalization and modernization, the Indian mindset still struggles to fully accept gender equality. This resistance to change has led to setbacks in the progress of women. Increasing incidents of violence, harassment,

crime, and humiliation against women are symptoms of broader political apathy and the failure to challenge entrenched social dogmas. Barriers such as limited access to education, employment opportunities, high population, inflation, and scarce resources further restrict the development of women.

The influence of modern lifestyles and the adoption of technology are not necessarily indicators of progress for individuals or society as a whole. True societal progress requires dismantling frameworks that have historically kept women subordinate. Active participation by women from all social strata is crucial to achieving this change. The statement also points to the lack of support for social reform initiatives that aim to uplift women, even from within the female community itself. For example, the Women's Reservation Bill, which seeks to reserve a certain percentage of seats for women in legislative bodies, remains a hot topic of discussion, but many women, particularly at the grassroots level, remain unaware of its significance or what it entails.

Overall, it emphasizes the need for societal, political, and economic transformation to truly empower women, acknowledging that while changes have been made, much more work is needed to ensure women can fully participate in and benefit from social progress.

The statement sheds light on the complex challenges women face today, including insecurity, male domination, lack of awareness about their rights, and limited decision-making power. Despite widespread discussions on women's empowerment, much of the focus tends to be on economic, political, and health-related aspects. The statement argues that the social empowerment of women should be given higher priority, as it is a crucial component for achieving true empowerment. Social empowerment is about creating an environment where women can thrive not just in economic and political spheres, but also in their daily lives, relationships, and societal roles.

#### **Major five Components of Women Empowerment**

- 1) **Self-worth:** Women should have a strong sense of self-esteem and value.
- 2) **Freedom of Choices:** Women should have the right to make decisions about their own lives, including their personal, professional, and family choices.
- 3) **Access to opportunities and resources:** Women must have equal access to education, career opportunities, and other resources that contribute to their overall well-being.
- 4) **Control over their lives:** Women should have the power to control their own lives, both within their households and in society at large.
- 5) **Ability to influence social change:** Women should be able to influence societal norms and contribute to creating a more just social and economic order, both nationally and internationally.

#### **B.R. Ambedkar's Vision and Social Work Practice with Women Empowerment**

Social Work Practice can play pivotal role in Women Empowerment through various skills, techniques, approaches and methods. B.R. Ambedkar's Vision about women empowerment is also based on solid foundations of equality, democracy, cooperation, and education and justifiable rights for all. The role of social worker as informer, educator, facilitator, mediator, guide, counselor, therapist, and enabler can be instrumental to ensure Women Empowerment through Social Work Practice. In addition to it, the methods of social work such as Social Case Work, Social Group Work and Community Organization can play significant role in empowerment of women in rural, as well in urban areas. Some of the major roles and interventions through social work, which can be very important to ensure women empowerment as given below-

- **Offer Formal and Non-formal Education for women:** The empowerment activities that have been carried out so far should be sustained and expanded, especially to enhance access to education services, with a particular focus on non-formal education initiatives. B.R. Ambedkar's Vision was also to empower the women with education.
- **Ensure Economic Independency for Women's Empowerment:** Women should be provided economic independency in terms of self-employment, jobs, small shops and entrepreneurs, activities are very important in women empowerment. B.R. Ambedkar's Vision was also to empower the women with economic rights with favorable and just working conditions.
- **Straighten the Self-Determination in Women:** B.R. Ambedkar's Vision and Social work profession emphasize that by giving individuals the power to steer their own lives, allowing them to chart their own path, making decisions on their own terms, which would boost up their self-determination power.



- **Accessibility to required and useful Information:** Information is very crucial in women empowerment. It equips individuals with the knowledge they need to make informed choices, sparing them the headache of missing pieces and mishaps.
- **Collaboration & Community Engagement:** Empowerment isn't a one-person action. It thrives when people come together. When individuals actively engage with their communities and work in partnership with others, that's when real change happens. Together, we can accomplish so much more.
- **Foster a Strength-Based Approach- Helping the women** by focusing on strengths and achievements, inspire confidence and nurture growth, helping women to feel empowered and motivated.
- **Enable Access to Resources- Empower women** by guiding individuals to resources, whether these are education, healthcare, or housing, which provide the tools they need to thrive and reach their goals.
- **Advocate for Policy Changes-** Policies often create invisible barriers. As social workers, we have the power to push for changes that benefit marginalized communities, clearing the path for a smoother journey towards equality.
- **Promote Self-Advocacy-** True empowerment happens when individuals can advocate for themselves. Equip them with the tools to communicate their needs, understand their rights, and engage confidently in conversations that matter. It's about building the skills for self-expression and self-empowerment.
- **Collaborate with Community Leaders-** Assisting women by working alongside local leaders or trusted voices, can amplify the message of empowerment and make a more lasting impact. When communities see their own advocating for change, the process of integration and acceptance becomes much smoother.
- **Continuous Education and Workshops-** Keep learning alive! Organize workshops that educate valuable skills like financial literacy, health awareness, and rights education. These sessions not only empower individuals with information but also create space for networking and mutual support.
- **Motivating women to Celebrate Small Wins and small happiness's-** Every achievement, no matter how small, is a reflection of their resilience. Celebrating these moments shows progress and reinforces their journey towards empowerment.
- **Sowing the Seeds of Sustainable Change-** Addresses long-term needs through social work interventions in planting seeds of resilience, self-reliance, and self-efficacy, like the age-old teaching-a-person-to-fish scenario. With empowerment, individuals aren't just surviving; they're thriving.
- **Cultivating Resilient Communities-** When individuals within these communities are empowered, they bring their strengths to the table, creating a more cohesive, resilient whole. Stronger communities are better equipped to face challenges, support each other, and build networks of mutual aid.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's perception of the Indian social order, whether in Hindu or Muslim communities, was one where women were systematically denied their rightful place in society. He recognized the deep-rooted social structures that perpetuated this injustice and was fervently searching for solutions to dismantle these harmful systems. Ambedkar's vision was to create a society grounded in **equality, justice, and fraternity**, where all members, especially women, could enjoy their rightful place and opportunities. Ambedkar saw **education** as a tool to uplift society, offering a means of escape from the darkness of ignorance and the oppressive structures that bound the lower classes. He wanted to transform society by addressing social degradation, particularly in Hindu society, and create a just order that would benefit humanity as a whole. His belief in the power of education to ignite change was reflected in his efforts to establish educational institutions that catered to the development of marginalized communities.

Social Work Practice can play pivotal role in Women Empowerment through various skills, techniques, approaches and methods. B.R. Ambedkar's Vision about women empowerment is also based on solid foundations of equality, democracy, cooperation, and education and justifiable rights for all. Therefore, the methods of Social Work and application of approaches and theories can play significant role in empowerment of women in rural, as well in urban areas.

Ambedkar's **philosophy of education** and his vision for the socio-economic and political development of the country remain relevant in the 21st century.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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